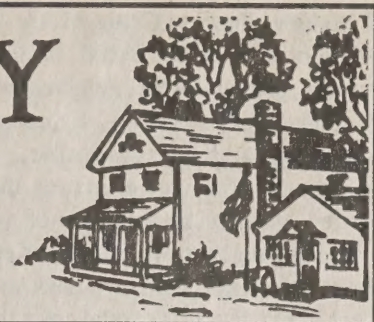




# MONTEREY NEWS

OCTOBER 1996  
VOLUME XXVI · Number 10



## THE TOWN

**Litigation with Sheffield.** "There is too much to lose by going to litigation. The divisiveness of this action will impact on the school district and all the member towns for many years to come. We feel that mediation wherein each of the participants is willing to work cooperatively and foregoes any personal agendas would be productive."

The above is quoted from a letter of the Monterey Select Board dated August 12 and addressed to the Select Boards of the other four towns in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. It was written in response to Sheffield's lawsuit against Alford, Egremont, Monterey, and New Marlborough over disagreement as to enforcement of a one person/one vote mandate from federal and state government in selection of the district school committee. Although all the towns have expressed a desire to avoid legal proceedings, at this writing the impasse remains.

Currently each member town elects a number of representatives to the committee (for example, Monterey elects one representative and Sheffield elects four), which has ten members. This system has been in place since the origin of the school district in the 1950s. There are five familiar options for choosing the school committee, all of which comply with the mandate, and there is legal room for combining procedures: (1) election



ELEANOR KIMBERLEY

of committee representatives by voters in member communities, with representation apportioned according to town population; (2) election of committee members in district-wide, at-large elections; (3) election of committee members in district-wide, at-large elections, with community residence specified; (4) weighting committee members' votes according to the population they represent; (5) appointment of committee members by locally elected officials. In order for a procedure to comply, the spread in voting power between the weakest and strongest towns on the school committee cannot exceed ten percent. Presently weighted voting (option 4) and district-wide elections (option 3) have their champions in the debate, or lack of it.

On August 29 Select Board members, along with occasional legal counsel, school committee members, and interested parties from the five towns met at the Great Barrington campus of Berk-

shire Community College with Dr. Bruce Person graciously volunteering as facilitator. That meeting could only agree to meet again three more times, on September 11 and 17, and October 7. Sheffield insisted on an agenda for the first meeting, which Gige O'Connell of Monterey agreed to make up. Only Egremont responded to her request for agenda items; Egremont asked that all Sheffield signatories to the litigation against the four towns

agree to any final solution adopted, and that all discussion not be used in any future court proceeding.

On September 9 Monterey received a fax from Sheffield clarifying conditions for discussion to which they would agree: no joint meetings among Select Board members of the towns, only among others; no formal agenda; voting only by the parties involved, not the entire group. Sheffield Select Board members stated again that they have no intention of putting litigation in abeyance, and questioned the sincerity of all the defendants in the search for an equitable solution.

At the meeting on September 11 no agreement was reached. Barbara Marchione of the New Marlborough Select Board proposed a twelve-member School Committee rather than the present ten members, which met with a positive response.

At the meeting on September 17 there was again no agreement beyond the desire of most towns to avoid litigation.



Courtney Turner, Chair of the New Marlborough Select Board, brought in several proposals for weighted voting that involved a twelve-, fourteen-, or sixteen-member committee, with weighted voting not to exceed the required ten percent deviation of voting values among the towns. Charles Ketchen from Alford said that town pays ten percent of the district's capital costs (based on property values, not population, and used toward debt on the school building) and will not tolerate the inequity of weighted voting on district operating costs. David Macy, of the Sheffield Select Board, reminded the meeting that Sheffield "doesn't even need to be here," but is present to show good faith in trying to reach a compromise. Macy said he doubted that choosing among options in a public election, as has been suggested, would resolve the impasse.

Toward the end of the meeting, Dr. Person noted that compromise appeared remote, and questioned whether the final scheduled meeting could be productive. With ten minutes left of the hour-and-a-half time limit on meetings, the group agreed to study Courtney Turner's proposals before it reconvenes on October 7.

The Monterey Select Board will not meet on Monday evening, October 7, due to this school district meeting. They will meet at 10 a.m. that day as usual.

**Taxes.** Assistant Tax Assessor Harry Gustafson attended the meeting of the

Select Board on September 16 for the public hearing convened prior to setting the percentage of the tax levy to be borne by each class of taxable property. The Board voted to accept his proposal that all five classes—residential, commercial, industrial, open space, and personal property—continue to pay the same rate based on full evaluation. He anticipates a tax rate for fiscal 1997 of \$8.72 per thousand dollars of assessed value, up \$.46 from the 1996 rate. Total property valuation has decreased by \$1,073,727. (from \$163,051,588.) primarily as a result of tornado damage. No residents attended the hearing.

**Complaint.** Dale Duryea came before the Select Board on September 16 to complain about speeders passing stopped school buses near his residence on Main Road east of the town center. Police Chief Gareth Backhaus advised him to approach the Select Board, and Peter Brown suggested that police patrol would be appropriate when the school bus goes through town, but no specific action has been taken at this writing.

**Sand and Salt.** The Select Board decided that Monterey will participate with Great Barrington and Sheffield in a joint salt bid, hoping for a lower price based on larger quantity. Monterey accepted a sand bid of \$7.25 per ton from J Donovan and Son of Stockbridge.

— Jane Black

## MONTEREY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

What does being healed mean? How do we experience healing in our lives, and become whole? Each of us answers this differently. Healing will be the focus of a discussion series at Monterey United Church of Christ. All are welcome to attend on Mondays, October 21 and 28, and November 4, 7–8:30 p.m. For further information, contact MaryKate Jordan at 528-5557, or Judy Hayes at 528-1874.

## GRANT DEADLINE

The deadline for 1996-97 Cultural Council grants is Tuesday, October 15. The Council administers state money for projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences which benefit the Monterey community. Pick up and fill out applications at the Monterey Town Hall, and mail them to the Council at P.O. Box 137, Monterey, 01245. Questions? Call me at 528-9312.

— Julie Shapiro, Chair  
Monterey Cultural Council

## EVENING CLASSES

Mt. Everett Regional School will hold evening classes for community members on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, 6:30–9 p.m., beginning Monday, October 7, 1996. Basic remediation in math and English, and preparation for the Graduate Equivalency Diploma will be available to any resident over sixteen who dropped out of school but now wants to continue with education. Transportation is available. To enroll, call David Pottle at 413-229-8734.

## NOTICE

The Monterey Town Hall will be closed on Columbus Day, Monday, October 14, 1996, with no meeting of the Select Board or the Board of Health that day. Next meeting of these boards will be Monday, October 21, 1996.

— Monterey Select Board



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## SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE REPORT

**Hazardous Waste Collection Set.** We hope those of you who want to participate in the household hazardous waste day are busy preparing for the collection on Saturday, November 2. The site is the same as last year, and participants are asked to call 1-800-238-1221 to set up your arrival time. Last year the event was most orderly, with cars turning up just when they said they would. No lines, no congestion. Local media will have more details as the date approaches.

Again, here is a basic rundown of what will be accepted:

- Anything with labels reading "CAUTION, Keep out of reach of children," or with remedies for exposure or ingestion.
- Oil based paints, varnish, shellac, wood stripper, floor wax, and furniture polish.
- Pool chemicals, acids, fungicides herbicides, insecticides, flea and tick control products, poisons, chemistry sets, oven cleaner, fluorescent tubes.

Although latex paint is not hazardous, it will be accepted if it is of good quality. The Center for Ecological Technology gives it away for reuse, thereby acting on the second of the three ecological Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle). As our transfer station now accepts and recycles motor oil, oil filters, anti-freeze, tires, and car batteries, these items will not be accepted. Household batteries are no longer made with hazardous materials, so they also will not be accepted.

**Money and the Future.** The Finance Committee has requested that all town boards estimate their expenses over the next five years. Your local Solid Waste Committee will meet in Town Hall on October 7 at 5 p.m. to discuss future spending needs, among other things. It has been suggested that our transfer station, which will undergo significant change in the next year, be covered. What are your views on this and other matters?

By the time you read this, the new paper compactor will be in place and the

big blue container will be out of there. This will be a boon to all of us, but mostly to Bob Curtis, our attendant, who has patiently stacked those bags of heavy papers all through the spring and summer. We won't have to bag our paper anymore, either. Thanks to Tryon Construction and Dan Andrus for completing the concrete pad and electrical work in a timely fashion.

Recycling is mandatory in Monterey. We have done well, but can do better. At our last meeting we discussed how to improve our efforts, and decided to try a big educational push next spring. Committee members will spend time at the transfer station helping people understand how and what to recycle. It is painful to think that with all the effort we make at town meeting combing line items on the warrant for ways to save the town money, we still throw perfectly good MRF bucks down the compactor. The Materials Recycling Facility in Springfield pays \$20 per ton for our recyclables! I know we'll get there; it's just a matter of time and getting the word out. Onward and upward!

— Joyce Scheffey



## SETH LIPSKY TO SPEAK

The *Forward*, America's only national English-language Jewish newspaper, is the brain child of Seth Lipsky, who will speak in Great Barrington on Sunday, October 27, at 11 a.m. at Camp Eisner. An offshoot of *Forverts*, the *Jewish Daily Forward*, the most respected Yiddish newspaper ever published in America, the *Forward* may well be on its way to becoming the premier Jewish newspaper of the twenty-first century. Mr. Lipsky, editor, president, and chief executive officer of Forward Newspapers,

L.L.C., will speak about the creation of the *Forward* in 1990. He will address Jewish journalism and the changing role of journalism as he sees it. An independent newspaper, *Forward* is known for its aggressive news coverage and sophisticated arts pages.

Mr. Lipsky grew up in New Marlborough, and graduated from Mount Everett Regional High School in Sheffield. He began his journalistic career working for the *Berkshire Courier* and filed for *The Berkshire Eagle* from Israel in the weeks after the Six Day War in 1967.

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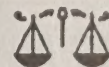
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## MPLT NEWS

We had the most glorious day for our celebration picnic at the Barway on the Mount Hunger land. The ancient sheep pen, formed by an almost completely circular rock wall, was the perfect spot to gather. We couldn't have asked for a better day, a better site, or a better group of people (except that there weren't enough of you: my fault; not enough publicity, I fear). We ate our lunches in dappled sunlight. In the spirit of the age it was a waste-free meal: we brought out what we brought in. No bother, no garbage.

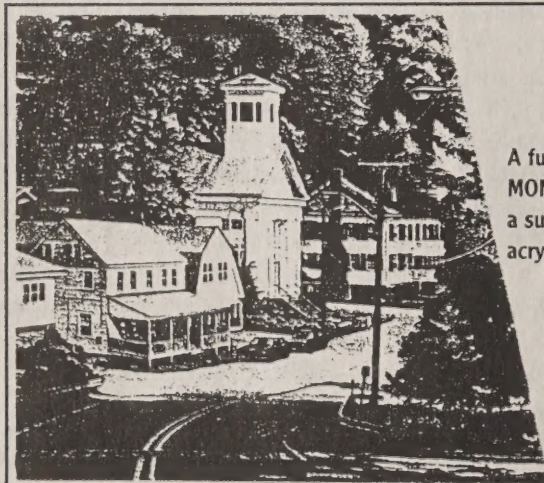
After lunch, David McAllester led a walk, and Bonner led a group on an infinitesimal hike: they only moved about four feet, and examined every natural item with hand lenses. Tess Dunlop was thrilled with a bole she found, which she

planned to take to her lucky (?) pre-K class to hatch. A third group was led by Bob Rausch, trail blazer, and Peter Tucker, forester. I joined the latter group, and we searched for a clear-cut area Bob and I had come across on an earlier walk. This area had evidently been cut by a hopeful developer some time ago, which distressed me until I learned that animals browse the edges of such places, and new forms of life prosper in the sunlight, providing forage for many creatures. It is refreshing to rejoice rather than lament, now and then. Board member Bob Emmel, unable to attend, was sorely missed on this wonderful day.

Before the picnic we held a meeting of the Board of Directors and elected new officers and members. New to the Board are Jane Black and Nancy Marcus. The officers are Joyce Scheffey, President; Roger Tryon, Vice-President; Andrea Dunlop, Treasurer. The position of clerk was left open for the time being.

**Membership '96.** Many people did not rejoin this year. There was probably some confusion due to the Mount Hunger effort, for which so many of you coughed up so much. But in addition to such special fund-raising for acquisitions, members must rejoin the Land Trust each year in order to maintain its 501c3 non-profit status. So *please return your membership cards*. Ten dollars is our minimum yearly membership, but naturally we hope that those of you who can afford more will, well, afford us more. Thanks again for all so many of you have done this past year!

— Joyce Scheffey



### BERKSHIRE AUTUMN

A full size, full color litho-print of MONTEREY village caught in the glow of a sunlit October day. From an original acrylic painting by FRANK D'AMATO.

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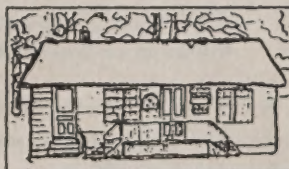
"The pancakes should be denoted by hubcap size ....

Small is a Honda, medium is a Ford Taurus,  
and large is a Mac truck."

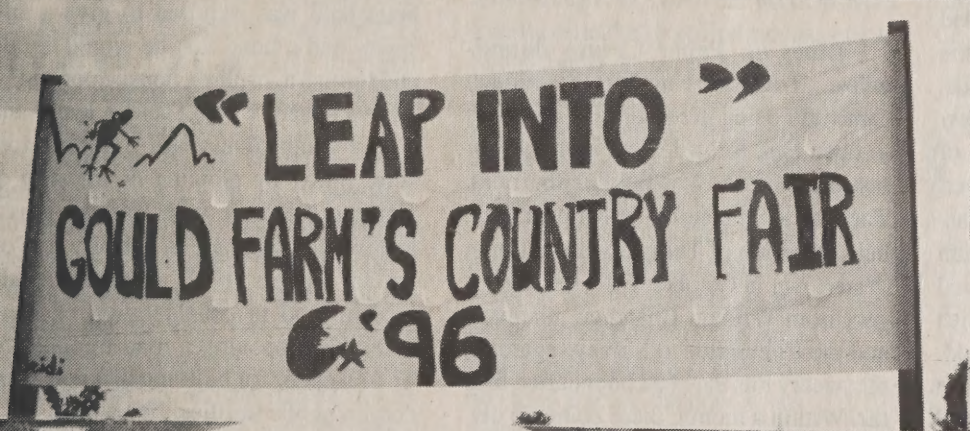
-- Matthew Breuer, a Roadside regular

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SUSAN ROUSSIN ET AL

*Gould Farm's Fifth Annual Country Fair drew a burger-munching, sunkissed crowd of some 1,200 last August, including (clockwise from top left) Ainsley Brodhead, Amy Goldfarb, Abe and Robert Klein, Steve Snyder, Susan Roussin, Jon Greene, and Dan Lacey.*

## NEW MARLBOROUGH CENTRAL AND MONTEREY SCHOOL

Forget the calendar. Summer was officially over August 28, when 101 children put aside their sand toys, fishing poles, and bikes for backpacks, pencil boxes, and soccer balls, and boarded buses for the first day of the 1996-97 school year.

There have been a number of changes made in personnel and class configuration at New Marlborough Central and at

Monterey School since last year. My focus this month is on one particular addition at NMC. Beginning with the first day of school, NMC now offers an after-school childcare program. While in place elsewhere in the district for a number of years, this is the first year such a program has been available at NMC. Southern Berkshire Child Care Director (and Montereyan) Laurie Shaw reports that twenty-three children participate in the program, which runs 2:30-5:30 p.m. Tuition is \$10 per day and scholarships

are available. Teacher Marie-Andrea Beaumier and aide Anna Duryea (another Montereyan) supervise a curriculum of outside playtime (weather permitting), snack, free choice, or homework and arts and crafts. It is a positive addition to the list of services our schools provide.

Papers have gone home regarding the Butternut Basin Student Ski Program. Just a reminder, applications are due no later than October 16.

— Deborah Mielke



## IN THE BEGINNING...

*This article is the first of a series on the history of Monterey United Church of Christ, written for Monterey News by Kathy Page Wasiuk and Delight Dodyk.*

It seems obvious that the history of a New England town and of its meeting house reflect each other, and that the shape and location of one changes with the other. So it is with Monterey.

Six years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, the Dutch built a fort on the Hudson River where Albany now stands. This first interior settlement of the New Netherlands supported Dutch claims of all land eastward to the Connecticut River, territory eventually claimed by the Massachusetts Bay settlers. (Dutch assertion of ownership east of the Hudson proved extravagantly optimistic.) The English slowly pushed west beyond Springfield. Mountainous terrain, fear of Native American incursions from the north, and unpleasant relations with the neighboring Dutch proved to be formidable barriers to early permanent establishments in the hill country. Reports of those who passed through the mountains did not stir enthusiasm: in the mid 1690s, for example, Benjamin Wadsworth of Boston, accompanied by a guard of soldiers, crossed the province to Albany; he reported the journey as "most frightful" and returned home through Connecticut rather than repeat the experience (Scott, p. 10).

The Dutch eventually transferred to English claimants the right to negotiate with native people for title. Native Americans crossed regularly through the middle portion of what would become Monterey, following animal trails that became the so-called Great Path, and doubtless fished the lakes and hunted the game. Great Barrington and Sheffield had been purchased for £460, three barrels of cider, and thirty quarts of rum. (Giving cider and rum to Native Americans in payment for lands was a common practice of colonials, and a subversive one, given the debilitating effects of alcohol on a people unused to it.) A petition filed in the Massachusetts General Assembly in 1722 granted organizing rights for those two townships as Lower and Upper

Housatunnuk. In June of 1737, negotiations by a lawyer and a soldier—Ephraim Williams, Esq., and Col. Nahum Williams—produced a further deed signed by Chief Konkapot, nine other Native American men, and one woman, granting land in exchange for £300. And so, a hundred years after Pilgrims covenanted together in Salem, a portion of the land ceded by Chief Konkapot was organized into a paper township by a simple act of the legislative pen.

**Lines on Paper Create Boundaries...** Township Number One (of four) came into being in response to demands to open land to settlement along a proposed road from Westfield to Sheffield. The first town meeting of Number One, held at the inn of Thomas Harrington in Watertown in October 1737, heard a report from William Chandler, surveyor, and the Committee to Survey regarding the twenty lots they had boundaried thus far. Within a month, there being no distinction between matters civic and ecclesiastic, the proprietors set aside two lots for the first and second ministers, and one for a meeting house.

A meeting house was necessary for many reasons: certainly to fulfill Protestant belief in preaching the Gospel, but also to attract further settlers to the land the proprietors had recently acquired and now hoped to sell, as the building would be a visible sign of amenities the new community could offer. A meeting house had civic as well as religious functions—host to town meetings, emergency shelter, etc.—and a town could not be incorporated until a church had been built and a "learned and orthodox minister" settled and ordained there (Parker, p. 18). Voting to tax themselves for support of the proposed ministry and meeting house, the proprietors proceeded to sell lots to settlers with the tax (based on acreage) attached. Thus did church and commerce simultaneously organize the first plan for European settlement.

The town was subdivided into sixty-three lots, and when demand for land outstripped availability, the proprietors added seven more names to their lists. The town was further subdivided into house lots, town lots, and mill lots of

seventy-five acres, created as squares on paper to be parceled out by auctions (November 15, 1737 through February 28, 1738) to the original proprietors. Four of these were clergymen: Rev. William Williams of Weston (who sold to Daniel Garfield), Rev. John Cotton of Boston, Rev. Warham Williams of Waltham (who sold to Jonas Brewer), and Jonathan Townsend of Needham. Proprietors could either retain or sell their rights to other speculators or to settlers; each head of household was required to give a £40 surety and a bond that he would "build and furnish a dwelling house upon his lot 18 foot square x 7 foot stud at least" and would within five years "improve five acres either by plowing or mowing or planting the same with English grass" and would guarantee to actually live on the lot (Myers, p. 5). Grantees could receive land in consideration of work undertaken opening a road through the Township, or for building and operating certain public utilities, like a mill.

The meeting house and the minister's portion were centrally located. While theologically and politically apt, and logical on paper, the decision did not go far enough in considering terrain, and held serious implications for the future.

**...and People Make a Community.** Earliest settlement came in April of 1739 in the southern portion, as the northern

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Tom O'Brien (Trustee) ..... 269-7471  
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Judy Hayes ..... 528-1874



valley was a periodically flooded marsh. The offer of a mill lot, contingent on building a sawmill, was made to one Samuel Bond, who refused, writing that he could not meet the conditions imposed; it was then offered to Thomas Slaton, who accepted but within days gave it up. The proprietors, anxious that this important industry be established, decided to tax themselves £1.10s to pay for a sawmill. The deal was then offered to John Brewer, who accepted, and who followed Isaac Garfield, Slaton and John Chadwick to Township Number One from his home in Hopkinton, returning the next year with a pair of stones for a grist mill as well (Myers, p. 5).

Within six months wives and families followed, and with (in all probability) some slaves they began the lengthy process of turning wilderness into farmsteads, meeting house, and mills. Brewer constructed his mills near the outlet of Twelve Mile Pond (now Lake Garfield). The first road, opened through the Township in 1737, was followed by Royal Hemlock Road to Hop Brook in the northern section in 1743, and a church building was started. The Brewer house, the Chadwick house, and the Bidwell house all still stand, and portions of the first road and Royal Hemlock Road still exist. The meeting house, the first of three that would be built, does not.

The settlers voted to build it in 1740, and assessed each property owner ten shillings to buy "boards to be sawed and to be seasoning three months." John Brewer and Thomas Slaton were delegated to get boards for the outside "and sufficient good white pine for the inside work." Construction was delayed due to the threat of war with France, but each proprietor was assessed ten more shillings for the "obtaining of some suitable person" to serve as minister. In 1742, they voted to build again, thirty-five by forty feet with suitable height for a one-tier gallery. In 1745, with another threat of war in the air, they sealed up the unfinished building, ordered "waterboring the mortises and underpinning [sic], sticking the boards, securing the window frames and all stuff provided for use," and instead fortified the Brewer, Slaton, and Watkins houses.

The following year they shingled the roof; itinerant preachers held occasional services. By 1750, the building was complete enough to pay serious attention to a formal covenant and ordination of a minister (Myers, p. 6).

**A Centerpiece.** Standing on a hill, and becoming visible from a distance as land was cleared to fields, the meeting house dominated community life as the place for town meetings, worship, and emergencies. It could be used to store munitions and be fortified against attack. Notices were posted on its doors, and proclamations read on its front steps. Political discussion and community decisions took place in the meeting house.

Surviving churches of the period typically had a door centered in the longer side of the single-storey building, and windows with closable shutters on all sides. Facing the door was a pulpit, raised for visual prominence and better acoustics. The building frame was most likely local oak, with an interior of plaster and pine. Pews might have been enclosed by low doors to preserve heat and cut down drafts. There was surely no heat other than foot warmers, so ministers and parishioners alike wore gloves and outer coats to services most of the year. It was altogether a simple building by practical necessity and by theology (the Calvinist reform of the perceived error of ostentation).

The Congregational meeting house population was held together by a cov-

enant, an agreement among its members. In May of 1750 the proprietors held their first meeting in the Township itself, and appointed three men to consult with neighboring ministers as to the suitability of one candidate for the ministry, Adonijah Bidwell. Within a month they reported that they found him satisfactory. In September of 1750, eight men of the community signed a document pledging themselves to "walk together as a church." Bidwell, one of the eight, was ordained a week later—set apart to serve as minister. He was a graduate of Yale, a former chaplain to Sir William Pepperel, a recent pastor in Simsbury, Connecticut, and supply preacher to Kinderhook, New York. Bidwell served as pastor for thirty-four years.

At the time of Bidwell's ordination there were four churches in the southern Berkshires: Stockbridge (1734), Sheffield (1735), Great Barrington (1743), and New Marlborough (1744), all staffed

by graduates, like Bidwell, of Yale. His near colleagues included the newly arrived Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), a prominent preacher associated with serious questions of salvation and grace which were debated in the Great Awakening of the 1730s and '40s; he had been expelled from Northampton's pulpit in 1750. His views would contribute to the post-Revolutionary doctrine of separation of church and state. Edwards' disciple Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803) served in Great Barrington, and was one



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of the "neighboring ministers" chosen to examine Bidwell's theological and moral views.

Bidwell's tenure was not easy. A grand house had been built on the minister's lot, but towns had a great deal of latitude in running things. The meeting house was not completely finished until 1761, eleven years after Bidwell arrived (Mansfield, p. 38). Baptists, Methodists, and Shakers infiltrated the area. There was a slackening of interest in religious matters generally, as newcomers focused on establishing and expanding their worldly portion. The political tensions between the colony and England grew, with private and public debate over the relationship of ruler and ruled. By the time of the Revolution, tax money was being used to pay the militia, and Bidwell had to strike, claiming penury, to get his pay, which was woefully in arrears. Church attendance reached a low ebb; the meeting house was used for town meetings and the posting of notices. A petition proclaiming that the "War, Resistance, and Opposition in which the United American Colonies are now engaged against the Fleets

and Armies of Great Britain is, on the part of the said Colonies, just and necessary" was circulated, and many churchmen signed. Of 153 men from Township Number One listed in the *History of Berkshire County, Massachusetts* as having served during some portion of the Revolution, forty-four had either brought their children to be baptized at the meeting house, or had been baptized there themselves as children.

The first meeting house did not survive the Revolution by much. Neglected, it burned in the 1790s.

— Kathy Page Wasiuk

*Marked references are in the collection of the Monterey Library, and may be seen there.*

*Tyringham Old and New*, by John A. Scott, 1905

"The Mother Church," by Deborah Parker, *Berkshire Magazine*, April/May, 1990

† *A Hinterland Settlement*, by Eloise Myers

† *New England's Monterey: Stories of the Town, Its Church*, by Julius Miner and Margery Mansfield

† *History of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men*, J. B. Beers & Co., New York, 1885

## COUNCIL ON AGING

The regular blood pressure clinic for October is cancelled. Instead, the annual flu clinic administered by the Berkshire VNA will be held on Tuesday, October 15, 9–11 a.m. in the basement at Town Hall. Influenza (the flu) is a serious disease, most common in the U. S. from December to April. Flu viruses pass from an infected person to the nose or throat of others, and can cause fever, cough, chills, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, even pneumonia and death (most common in elderly people); all people sixty-five years old or older, and any child or adult, including pregnant women, who have serious long-term health problems should get the vaccine.

A pneumonia vaccine clinic will be held on Thursday, November 7, at the Great Barrington Senior Center, 1–3 p.m. Since this not given more frequently than every five to ten years, check with your physician prior to attending.

The Monterey Council on Aging will host a free luncheon on Friday, October 18, at noon in the basement at Town Hall, followed by a guest speaker. Dan Eschen of Monterey will speak on ocean liner memorabilia. The public is invited.

— Pauline Nault



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# FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK/ CHILDREN'S HEALTH, INC.

The Family Support Network and Children's Health Program are based at Russell House, 54 Castle Street, Great Barrington; call 528-9311 for information.

**Family center to open.** The Family Support Network has received a grant from the Children's Trust Fund for a family center at the former Shelley's Art Studio on South Main Street in Great Barrington, and will relocate there in November. More details in the November newsletter.

**Hands at Work Fair.** The fourth annual Hands at Work Arts and Craft Fair will be held October 12, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Searles Castle, Main Street, Great Barrington. Admission is \$2 per person, with children under twelve free. The work of artists and craftsmen, a café, and children's activities will be offered. We welcome donations of food, and volunteers are also needed. Please call Claudette. Thanks to co-chairs Lois Ryder and Wendy Jensen for their hard work.

**Story Hours.** Story hours will be held in the libraries of Otis and Sandisfield during October and November, supported by a grant from The Children's Trust Fund. Storyteller Kathy Bracken of Monterey will be at the Otis Library on October 1 and 15, and November 5 and 19, 3:15-4:15 p.m.; at the Sandisfield Library on October 5 and 19, and November 2 and 16, 10-11 a.m. We thank librarians Nancy Loring of Otis and Ruth Dwyer of Sandisfield for their assistance.

**Volunteers needed.** The Family Support Network needs volunteers to assist area families with transportation, information, emotional support, and childcare. Ten hours' training is required, and sessions will be held on Tuesdays in October, 6-8 p.m. at Russell House. Volunteers are asked to donate one or two hours a week for a year. For information, please call Claudette.

**Babysitting Cooperative.** The mothers of the Sheffield parent-child playgroup have created a babysitting cooperative organized by Jessica Redman. Call her at 229-3140 for information.

**Free Tickets To Pleasant Valley Sanctuary.** Not all the free passes to the Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox were used this summer. Anyone wishing a pass can call Claudette.

**Playgroup Update.** Playgroups are under way, but there have been schedule changes: Becket will meet on Wednesdays at the Town Hall, 9:30-11:30 a.m. with leader Alissa Goddard, and Monterey will meet on Fridays at Gould Farm, McKee House, 9:30-11:30 a.m. with leader Kiersten Miller. Address playgroup questions to Miriam.

**Grandma's Attic.** The toy and clothing exchange located on the third floor of Construct, 144 Main Street, Great Barrington, will be open the following dates and times: All Saturdays in October, 10 a.m.-12 noon. Every Thursday afternoon, 1-4 p.m. Fridays, October 11

and 25, 3-5 p.m. Please donate clean, unstained children's clothing.

Here is our calendar:

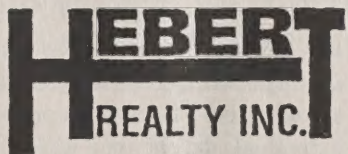
**October 2.** Breastfeeding Support Group, 9:30 a.m. at Russell House. Call Cheryl Dobson, 528-8580

**October 5.** Fathers' Group will visit Great Barrington Airport from 12 noon. Bring a snack. Call Tony for more information.

**October 7, 14, 21, 28.** Single mothers' playgroup, 10 a.m.-12 noon at Russell House. Call Claudette for information.

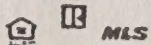
**October 8.** New Parents' Series: Breastfeeding and Nutrition, presented by Debbie Phillips-Wikle, nutritionist at Russell House. Call Loren for information and registration. 6:30-8:30 p.m. CPR training is offered at Fairview Hospital. Call Ann Marie Reagan at 528-0790 for information.

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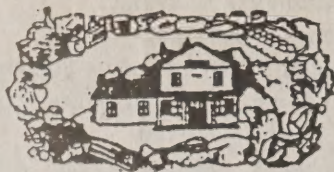
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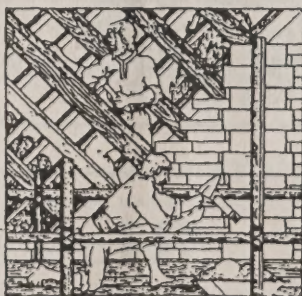
## SENATOR SAYS

As many elderly residents are aware, a proposition has been made by Blue Cross and Blue Shield to dramatically increase Medex insurance rates. In response to the recent proposal regarding Medicare Supplement Insurance rates, I have joined together with Massachusetts legislators to sign a resolution attempting to block the increase. The Division of Insurance has received the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts proposal requesting permission to increase rates on several "Medigap" programs in 1997. On September 9, the Senate adopted a resolution stating its strong opposition to raising Medex premiums. The resolution has been sent to the Commissioner of the Division of Insurance, Linda Ruthardt. This official document urges the Commissioner to reject the rate increases which have been proposed by Blue Cross and Blue Shield. The Senate resolution reflects my deep personal concern that, if approved, this change could cause great hardship to many elderly consumers. The proposed 20-30% Medex rate increase is of particular concern to the large number of Medicare subscribers who live on fixed incomes. These individuals depend on a variety of Blue Cross and Blue Shield insurance programs to protect their health. Constitu-

ents have expressed the fear that if the proposed increase is accepted they would be forced to choose between losing insurance coverage and paying for daily necessities. No citizen should be forced to make that choice. I am extremely concerned about the impact which a rate increase could have on the lives of elderly citizens in western Massachusetts. I will closely follow the progress of the proposal as it is under consideration by the Division of Insurance. Massachusetts law requires that public hearings be held in order to consider all opinions before a decision on the rate increase may be made.

Throughout September and October, interested parties will be given the opportunity to express their concerns in written and oral testimony. This issue must be carefully considered by the Division of Insurance before approving or rejecting the Blue Cross and Blue Shield proposal later this fall. In signing the Massachusetts Senate resolution, I have clearly expressed my opposition to the proposal which attempts to raise Medex insurance rates. As another beautiful autumn descends upon western Massachusetts, I will diligently continue my efforts to represent the voices of elderly constituents in this important matter.

— Senator Jane Swift



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## REP RAP

### Legislative Update

In 1992 Wayne Lo, a student from Montana attending Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, purchased an assault rifle in Pittsfield and went on a shooting spree at the school, killing two people and injuring four others. Because he was from Montana, Lo did not have to go through the same procedures as Massachusetts residents to purchase a gun. Instead, he needed only comply with Montana's gun law. That law simply required a gun purchaser to sign a document stating he or she did not have a criminal record; verification not required.

Prompted by those horrific events, I sponsored a bill to close the non-resident loophole in Massachusetts gun laws. It took seven attempts and four years, but the measure was finally signed into law as part of the Fiscal Year 1997 budget, and was enacted on July 1, 1996. It was ludicrous to have a law that placed stricter requirements on the law abiding tax paying citizens of our Commonwealth than on strangers; allowing them to walk into our neighborhoods and buy a gun with no questions asked.

My amendment states that in order to purchase a gun in Massachusetts, a non-resident must be at least eighteen years old and hold a valid Firearms Identification Card from his or her home state. Further, the home state's FID requirements must be at least as stringent as Massachusetts' requirements. The Colonel of the Massachusetts state police will publish a list of those states who maintain acceptable FID requirements each year.

It's amazing to think of the weak gun statutes of other states that allow people to buy weapons. In Missouri, Wyoming, and Idaho you can buy a gun with a driver's license as long as you are not a minor or intoxicated at the time of the sale. Until now, non-residents who wanted to purchase a gun in Massachusetts only needed to comply with their home state's laws, however weak they may be. With the passage of this measure we have the comfort of knowing that it is more difficult for someone like Wayne Lo to purchase a gun in Massachusetts

and that tragedies as the one at Simon's Rock will never happen again.

As a registered gun owner, I am amazed by the opposition to this commonsense legislation. True sportsmen go through the proper procedures in obtaining guns. This legislation addresses those who take advantage of the loophole. An argument against a law that simply levels the playing field makes no sense. This measure in no way restricts law abiding sportsmen from obtaining guns, but it stops lunatics like Lo from walking in off the street and purchasing weapons without at least the same waiting period that any local hunter would face.

[As for Wayne Lo, he is currently serving two consecutive sentences of life in prison without parole.]

— Rep. Christopher J. Hodgkins



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## CLOTHESLINE

*I go out in the early morning  
To hang dense, wet clothes on a line.*

*The line stretches between two maple trees  
Because the dryer squeaks incessantly  
As it turns in labor, making towels warm, soft.  
It reminds me of the laundromat in Boston.  
I'd sit mesmerized, watching the glass door,  
Hoping to meet the woman of my dreams  
As my underwear turned and leaped  
Like a gerbil on the wheel 'round and 'round.*

*Save the planet? Save the dryer!  
The correctness of a clothesline does not faze me.*

*I feel resentment while hanging the clothes.  
I am the man about the house.  
I feel guilty for my chauvinistic thoughts.  
I let it pass. It's what I learned, not what I do.*

*I step off the back porch and notice  
Sparkling dew on sharp blades of uncut grass.*

*My dad cut the grass. So do I.  
I think of an older woman in town  
I've noticed when I drive by.  
She's always cutting her lawn!  
Was she robbed of her life by tradition?  
She could work at the golf course.  
I dream of a cabin in the mountains of Idaho.  
No lawn, just the sweet smell of sagebrush.*

*I pin my damp, torn sweat pants on the strained line.  
The left leg points to the base of the tree.*

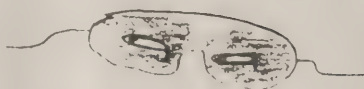
*There my whole experience is changed  
By a thorn-protected blackberry bush.  
Hanging at the end of bending stems  
Are succulent blackberries ready to fall at a touch.  
I pick, my hands stained with nature's ink.  
I eat. They explode, tart, sweet.  
My teeth crunch the tiny seeds.  
I close my eyes and smile.*

— John Humphrey

## MORNING OPALS

*At sunrise, the level rays  
Light the treetops, drop lower,  
Reach the swamp and strike  
A thousand sparks from dewdrops.  
On the bending iris leaves  
Each curved, green band  
Is solidly beaded with rows  
Of opals. As I move my head,  
They take turns, glittering:  
Each in its moment is a tiny sun,  
Iridescent, matching in light  
The songsparrow's sparkling trill.*

— David P. McAllester





## DEATH OF A WITCH IN COUNTY CLARE

*Come to a phoenix funeral  
an occasion to be sad  
a shroud of holy ignorance  
in which the bird is clad  
there are winds of cold reproach  
as the casket rattles by  
her beak is worn and gaping  
ah! but the emerald in her eye!*

*rain, wash the cobblestones  
the old girl is dead  
hungry grass and charlock  
will limn her feet and head*

*tears, perhaps, from ancient times  
no mourners here to weep  
a wicked sun is waiting  
to lick her from her sleep!*

— A. O. Howell

## TIME TRAVELS

*Time travels at a new and varied rate.  
When it's precisely measured in the bone,  
the facts of life change. After forty-eight*

*the glass is still half full, although, this late,  
the Reaper's been around. As friends are mown,  
time travels at a new and varied rate.*

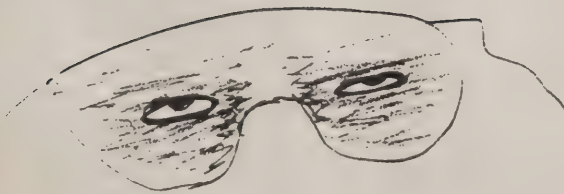
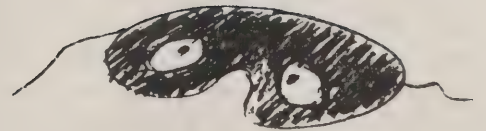
*Great dreams once put on hold no longer wait.  
First, seams of understanding are re-sewn.  
The facts of life change after. Forty-eight,*

*and hormones face retirement. Call it fate:  
the body whispers how it's here on loan.  
Time travels at a new and varied rate.*

*It gambols and it stumbles, changes gait.  
Despite the rumor, no need to bemoan  
the facts of life. Change, after forty-eight,*

*grows serendipity, becomes a blessed state.  
Where woman comes to know herself as crone  
time travels at a new and varied rate.  
The facts of life change after forty-eight.*

— MaryKate Jordan





## CEDAR WAXWINGS: ELEGANCE AT HARVEST TIME

This is it, the glory time in Berkshire gardens and orchards. Those of us who grow our own are gobbling it down in the garden, pulling long beans off the poles, plucking warm tomatoes from the vine. We will never have it so good again. All we can do is eat like crazy and hope we'll remember this during the dark side of the year. When have we had a year like this for blackberries? Those long wet weeks of June and July have burned off now to a perfect berry season.

We're not the only ones stuffing ourselves these the sunny days. The spiders in our summer kitchen have made their masterpiece giant webs under the skylight and are growing fat on late summer insects. In the clearing south of our house we watched a young sapsucker hawking for insects, as if she were a phoebe. During supper the bats came out, two different sizes, and picked insects from the air while we ate our squash and beans, and all day the cedar waxwings sat around in the treetops making their sociable wheezy buzzing calls. They love insects and fruit, and right now there's plenty of both, just in time for the second brood of babies.

Even without binoculars it's easy to identify the cedar waxwings. They have a debonair look, a sleek elegance complete with crest and velvety black mask. I've always thought there was something a little military-looking about them, in an understated way. They are tidy and smart-looking, like trim officers in uniform. Edward Howe Forbush, Massachusetts State Ornithologist from 1893 to 1929, has written of cedar waxwings in the eloquent language of his era:

Who can describe the grace and elegance of this bird? What other common bird is dressed in a robe of so delicate and silky a texture? Those shades of blending beauty—velvety black brightening into

fawn, melting browns, shifting saffrons, Quaker drabs, pale blue-gray and slate, with trimmings of white and golden-yellow, and little red appendages on the wing-quills not found in any other family of birds—all, combined with its symmetrical form, give it an appearance and



distinction peculiarly its own. Its erectile crest expresses every emotion. When lying loose and low upon the head it signifies ease and comfort. Excitement or surprise erect it at once and in fear it is pressed flat.

The waxwings are named for the glossy red bits of "wax" on the tips of their wing feathers. These small bits are usually found only on the secondaries, or inner wing feathers, but I've read that they may also occur on the primaries (outer feathers) and even on the tail, though this is quite unusual. They are an extension of the tip of the central shaft of the feather and make a solid bright accent when the wing is folded. When the wing is spread, they show up as seven red jewels in a slate wing.

Some flocks of cedar waxwings remain north all winter, surviving on dried or frozen berries such as bittersweet and sumac, and over-wintering insects gleaned from crevices in tree bark, and caterpillar eggs. One early observer watched waxwings in February hawking snowflakes from the air as they fell.

Other flocks come north in the spring, after wintering in Central America. Probably these are the ones that breed here, while the northern winterers move still farther north for breeding. Males and females work together to build the nest, with plenty of time out for socializing, which they do in flocks. Pairs from a flock may nest as close together as twenty-five feet, and even during incubation they will get together socially. Waxwings are famous for their love of overripe fruit and can get drunk on fermented cherry juice. When this happens they lose some of their elegant look, temporarily. They are also known for their inability to resist just one more chokecherry, even after they are completely filled up. Forbush writes of a group of six on a branch, all facing the same direction, gorged on cherries.

Someone had picked another cherry and this was passed from bird to bird up and down the line until finally one of them was able to fit it into her mouth where it stayed half in and half out. Food passing is common among waxwings and is part of their courtship behavior, too.

If you are out in the garden and hear a high buzzing "see, see, see" in the treetops, look for the cedar waxwings. You'll know them by their black velvet masks, their crests, and the sheer romance of their refinement. If one word comes to your mind, it will be "suave."

— Bonner J. McAllester

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## WILDLIFE SURVEY

**By the Road.** The dominant color is white these days. Queen Anne's lace is still everywhere as is wild cucumber in the roadside shrubbery. Here and there are big patches of Japanese knotweed, also known as Mexican bamboo, four to ten feet high and adorned with numerous spiky clusters of greenish white flowers something like those of the wild cucumber. One of Monterey's largest patches is by Main Road (Route 23) just east of the Grotz's. The hollow, jointed stems resemble bamboo, but are succulent rather than woody and the plant comes from Japan, not Mexico! The white masses of wood asters are much more abundant at the edges of woodlots or along the roads than in more shady places.

**Around Lake Garfield.** The lake is colorful with the bright yellow of shrubby cinquefoil, that has been blooming all summer, the clusters of purple to black viburnum berries, the red umbels of hobblebush berries (also viburnums) also turning black; the pink spikes of water smartweed. By the road and lake, and especially in all swampy places, the fall color is increasingly noticeable.

**Birds.** Ducks and geese are gathering for their great flights south. Of the other birds, those we see and hear are mostly crows, their cousins the jays, and woodpeckers from downey to pileated. A number of gulls have visited the lake lately—they seem to have been blown inland by Hortense. There have been bald eagle sightings; Dale Duryea had one over his meadow September 16. Herons are still making their majestic flights over the lake. Joe Baker spotted a kestrel (sparrow hawk) at Hunger Mountain Farm, and an indigo bunting. He heard a phoebe sing when the sun came out September 21.

**Coyotes and Other Mammals.** Dale has heard from the Fish and Wildlife people that an extensive study of coyote behavior is about to begin. A student at the University of Massachusetts will be researching coyote dens and vocalization. It will help this study if anyone in our region who sees or hears coyotes makes a note of the date, the time of day, the actions and the sounds. There

are different calls for "Get out of my territory!" "Where is everybody?" "Come over here." and so forth. We can all benefit from more information about these ever-more-present Berkshire neighbors. Coyotes have been heard to howl back at sirens. Dale says that human calls about coyotes have tripled all over the county in recent weeks. Nine goats were lost in the Alford region, more sheep at Gould Farm, a deer brought down close to somebody's house in Egremont, a small dog lost in Stockbridge. A scarcity of red foxes may be attributable to coyotes, too. He says that bears and squirrels are getting rambunctious as winter approaches. The former are putting on fat to see them through hibernation and the latter are storing food directly. Grey squirrels are prying their way into houses with a fervor he hasn't seen before. He has formerly found mothballs, spread around, to be a good deterrent but in one recent case, at Jug End in Egremont, the squirrels simply brought them outside and went right on with their food search, indoors. Beavers, too, are getting busy repairing dams and lodges and storing food. They are piling stacks of branches, especially poplar, alder and maple, in the water near their lodges. They can get to them, for the bark, even under the ice.

**A Rattlesnake.** In an unusual sighting, Dale saw an eastern timber rattler on Jug End Road in Egremont on Friday, September 13. It looked like a dark stick, but not quite, so he stopped for a closer look. "He didn't bother me, so I didn't bother him," says Dale.

**Berries.** Berries are everywhere: viburnum, grey-twigged dogwood, mountain ash, deadly nightshade, barberries, honeysuckle, white and red

baneberries, winter holly, moosewood, wintergreen, false Solomon's seal, elderberries, pokeweed, and clusters of red berries lying on the ground—all that remains of our white and red trillium.

**Flowers.** In addition to those mentioned above, the following are still persisting into the fall: spearmint, bouncing Bett, goldenrod, cow lily, water lily, purple loose strife, jewelweed, gentians, meadowsweet, boneset, pearly everlasting, purple aster, silverrod, ragweed, sorrel, primrose, yellow hawkweed, red hawkweed, black-eyed Susan, wild thyme, mallow, ladies thumb, pink knotweed, daisy, bladder campion, red clover, purple aster.

**Fungi and Saprophytes.** Failing a list from a real expert, I can report Indian pipe, beechdrops, puffballs, and a great harvest of delicious honey mushrooms. Fall is the time for all kinds of mushrooms.

**Insects.** Midges have been with us all summer; it's been a lively summer for mosquitoes, and still is; yellow jackets have made their underground nests and defend them valiantly against blundering walkers as I, my guests, and family can all testify. Gall insects, small wasps with a wonderful gift for chemistry, lay their eggs on plant tissue and stimulate the plant to create a tumor like growth around the larvae. This gall provides juices to feed the larvae and sturdy protection from predators. The mature insects burrow their way out in the spring ready to start the process over again. Goldenrod and blackberries host these creatures, and oaks produce "oak apples" in response to the chemistry.

— David P. McAllester



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## THE ACCIDENTAL MODEL

Visiting a friend the other day I was flipping through the October issue of *Mirabella* and spotted the good news: haphazard glamour *is In!* For sure, if there's any kind of glamour that I am going to attain, it is of the haphazard variety. I won't bore you with the details but apparently unkempt hair is the current rage. Not the sort of teased/fried Hollywood look that we've all become accustomed to (my mother would say "Good Lord, she looks like she's been stirred with a stick!") but a kinder, gentler "do." The vogue thing is to have a ponytail (or a top-knot as they call it in fashion lingo) with a bit or a bunch of hair falling out of your hair-tie. No problem! I felt particularly gratified that at that very moment I was a regular fashion plate. My hair had been neatly pulled back in a ponytail that morning but by now it was a draw as to whether there was more hair in the ponytail or out of it. I used to catch sight of my reflection in the late afternoon and wince. No more! I can now walk around assured that I'm just bringing a little bit of runway fashion to our New England village.

Another piece I've recently seen (*Time* I think) reported that freckles are in. Really! I've never had such a run of luck. Messy hair and freckles in vogue! This is too much for one messy-haired-freckled-person to hope for! When I was young I used to complain to my mother about freckles. She would say, "That's where the angels kissed you." It didn't take me long to realize that the angels



MAGGIE LEONARD

geared up for some serious kissing during the summertime. So much for that fairy tale. Later in life Mom assured me that my freckles would go away as I got older. Well time is marching on, and it appears that if my freckles do disappear, they will be rapidly replaced by age spots. Apparently, the fashion word on freckles is that they give a woman a "more accessible beauty," that all-American girl look.

Well that makes sense. The look is accessible to anyone who stays out in the sun too long and doesn't comb her hair. I call that real democracy.

Since I'm obviously a fashion trend-setter, I'd like to share a hot tip: Sorels. You know, those incredibly heavy winter boots that come with the removable felt liners? For most of us they're an absolute necessity. They keep feet warm

and dry all winter in the deepest snows. By the time spring rolls around you are ready to burn them. You don't walk in Sorels, you trudge. I assure you that these boots will be the next big thing in fashion. (They're probably the biggest things in your closet already!) Come cold weather all the fashion rags will show models clad

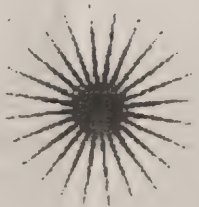
in the behemoth of all footwear. The quotes: "They make my legs look thin!" and "I love the understated elegant brown they come in." and "A must-have!". So when you see me this winter with my messy hair, freckles, and big winter boots, rest assured that I've worked hard for this look. It's all the rage.

— Maggie Leonard

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## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

### Summer: What Pleasured Me Most

First, walking my land along the banks of the Konkapot River in Monterey. I took only two dogs, so tiny they couldn't get over the logs. I carried them on my hips at times. Giant trees. Ferns and ferns. Sound of rushing water. We made a path down to the river about ten years ago. You can't find that path now: nature takes over.

Then seeing places and people I hadn't seen for a long time. Down in Stonington, Connecticut, I visited my son Tim. We went to a craft fair, buying things we didn't need, talked about his plans and my plans. We ate our way through the "Taste of Connecticut" fair in Mystic. We discussed his job at the boatyard, looked over the back-breaking clearing job he had done on his land outside his house.

Tim "dog-sat" for me so I could go to Cape Cod for a night with Gerry and Marge (former Montereyans). When I got to the Cape I wanted to see my old barn in Cotuit. I sold it about fifteen years ago. I found the beach I used to go to, the old houses on Main Street, but I couldn't find my barn! So many new houses, two malls nearby. I found my way into Orleans, halfway to Provincetown, to the comfortable garden apartment of Gerry and Marge. After dinner we went down to the beach to see the sun go down.

Back to Stonington, then off to brave the masses in New York City. The train tracks must be laid over rocks. What a rough ride. Try to put on lipstick in the MEN/WOMEN lavatory, hanging on the sink, which didn't stay down! In Penn Station I pushed my way from the train to the subway, asking questions all the way. I got off at Times Square to find the little French restaurant I had so much fun in many years ago. I asked politely four different people. They all shrugged—couldn't speak English! I lost heart, and ducked into a twelve-by-twelve-foot room for Thai food.

Subway again, underneath the East River. Subway stations in August are about a hundred degrees. When you step into a subway train it is air-conditioned. Your poor body! Every year the walk

from the subway up to Maddy's apartment in the Bronx gets longer and longer! Maddy, in her nineties (nurse to my mother before her death) is hale and hardy, had a chicken dinner all ready.

I visited my writer-nephew Strohn Woodard in Boothbay, Maine, a charming town at the end of a peninsula. Tim came up and we toasted Strohn's son, Colin, off to middle Europe (where all the trouble is) to write for American magazines. Maine is a state of mind, sun on the sparkling sea breaking on the rocks, mountains, forests, lakes. I followed old Route One in this setting, the same Route One I traveled in the Florida Keys 1400 miles south.

On my way to Maine and back twice this summer I stopped in Strafford, New Hampshire on Bow Lake. Charles and Nancy live right on the lake. My camper fits perfectly in their driveway, hooked up to their shed. Last visit I swam in the lake, and we took their boat out exploring. Good people to be with.

Back home in Massachusetts I went to Jacob's Pillow to see dancers Nickolais and Lewis. I studied with them years ago in New York City. The drive into the Pillow is dreadful. I heard a clunk. Parked, I walked to the back of my camper: the cage had fallen and Jock the bird was nowhere to be seen. All of a sudden five dogs and one cat were chasing one terrified bird! Jock hid behind the wastebasket in the corner. I was late to see the

dancers. Back, Jock was still hiding. We went home. I couldn't grab him. We all went to bed. In the morning Jock was so worn out he let me place him gently back in his cage. For a day and a half he huddled on the floor of the cage, then he flew around, ate, drank and started to sing. The family was all intact.

Always love to visit Barbara, reigning over cows on her hilltop farm in Hillsdale, New York. After haying or mending fences she joined me inside for dinner. My dogs barked their heads off at the cows (who didn't notice), then ran deliciously from room to room in her big house. After catching up with both of our lives we talked about books, plays, and looked at pictures, watched the late news. Then Joan and dogs fell asleep in her big guest bed. Next morning a hasty breakfast and we all departed for various tasks.

I'm a constant customer (for twenty years) at Shea's Pine Tree in Sheffield. I listen to the good music of old friend Arnie on nights he is there. I like it at the end of a busy day, when I have finished my chicken-in-a-basket at the bar and am dawdling over my beer. Joe and Barbara sit down behind the bar (for the first time all day) and talk with the customers still there—really friends. It's like a party among friends. Yes, it's good to be in familiar places, with familiar people.

—Joan Woodard Reed



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MAGGIE LUDWIG

## MONTEREY · BUILT 1901

### THE BIDWELL HOUSE

Thanks to museum members, our Board of Directors, many residents of Monterey, The Berkshire Foundation, Appalachian Press, and Lee Savings Bank, The Bidwell House raised the \$14,000 required for the matching grant application to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for a grant for the Museum's building restoration fund. In addition, the Museum wishes to thank State Representative Christopher Hodgkins; Monterey Select Board members Georgiana O'Connell, Fred Chapman, Peter Brown, and Stefan Grotz; Local Historical Commission Chair Anne Makuc; *Monterey News* Editor Peter

Murkett; and the 126 visitors to the Museum who signed letters of support required for the grant. The Massachusetts Historical Commission will announce the awards on November 13, 1996. If awarded, The Bidwell House will receive \$14,000 from the Commission toward replacing the roof, painting the Museum, and restoring the farmshop outbuilding.

October brings fabulous foliage and a great opportunity to hike the extensive trail system on the Museum's 190 acres of woodlands. On Sunday, October 13, The Bidwell House will host the annual hike on Royal Hemlock Road led by Bob Rausch of Gould Farm. Join us on this eighteenth-century road to the Shaker

Pond in Tyringham. It's a long walk; we leave The Bidwell House at 12 noon and return around 4 p.m. Appropriate clothing and footwear is essential. The hike is free of charge; of course, donations are gratefully accepted. Tours of the museum will be offered until October 15, so we urge you to bring your families and guests to see our fine example of old New England in its fall colors. Private tours of the museum are available throughout the winter months by appointment only (a great gift for your friends who are interested in historic houses). For more information, call 528-6888.

— Anita Carroll-Weldon, Director  
The Bidwell House Museum

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## AGNES MULROY WINS AWARD

Those of us who lived in Monterey in 1985 and earlier were accustomed to the sight of Agnes Mulroy out on a three-mile run each day after work at the Becton-Dickinson plant in Canaan, Connecticut. She was a near neighbor of mine at the time, and she told me of her enjoyment of the regular exercise and the feeling of health and well-being it gave her. Watching her speed by, I almost felt inspired to buy a pair of running shoes myself, but not quite.

Due to ill-health, Agnes' running days are now over, as are her working days, but she has stayed active in another sphere. In 1993 Agnes Mulroy and Elizabeth Hemmingway of Canaan filed a worker's compensation claim against Becton-Dickinson. An eighteen-month trial followed, and, on February 6, 1996, Connecticut Insurance Commissioner Linda Johnson ruled that Agnes Mulroy's health problems were work-related, and she was entitled to full worker's compensation benefits. Becton-Dickinson appealed the ruling, but I just heard from Agnes that the verdict has been upheld.

Agnes Mulroy's compensation suit and the events surrounding it were fully reported in *The Canaan Voice* in the summer of 1995, and we cannot adequately go back over that well-worked ground here. However, we have a tradition in the *News* of recognizing residents who receive honors and awards, and Agnes has joined that group.

On December 14, 1995, she received the Sixth Annual Joe A. Callaway Award for Civic Courage. Joe A. Callaway had a long career as an actor in theater, a university professor, reviewer, and lecturer. He was also a philanthropist both within and outside the world of theater. In 1990 he established the Award for Civic Courage to recognize "individuals in any area of endeavor who, with integrity and at some personal risk, take a public stance to advance truth and justice, and who challenge prevailing con-



*Agnes Mulroy at home in Monterey.*

ditions in pursuit of the common good." The award is administered by the Shafeek Nader Trust for the Community Interest. The Trust selected Agnes Mulroy as the 1995 recipient in recognition of the courage and determination with which she pressed her suit against Becton-Dickinson, not just to receive compensation for her own ills, but also to encourage others to come forward and push for general changes which will improve occupational health for all in the workplace. We of Monterey can feel proud that Agnes Mulroy is our neighbor.

— Ann Higgins

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## UPON MY WORD!

With the approach of Halloween (the Eve of all Hallows or All Saints) two word origins come to mind: tawdry and saunter. Tawdry means cheap and kitschy. Tawdry things were sold at medieval fairs honoring St. Audrey. Things, no doubt, displayed in booths in the marketplace. St. Audrey was an Anglo-Saxon woman with the unpronounceable, tongue-twisting name of Aethelthryth. She kept her virginity through two marriages (which might better have conferred sainthood upon her husbands), finally took the veil in 672 A.D. and founded a monastery in Ely in England. Her sister, who followed her as abbess, was named St. Sexburga.

Saunter, to wander aimlessly, comes from the French *Sante Terre* (Holy Santiago or Jerusalem).

"Hey, man, can't you see I'm santerring!"

I offer this for stupendous trivia: the ecclesiastical dog collar was invented by the Scottish minister Rev. Dr. Donald MacLeod in 1862. "I did it," said he, "and it is now recognized as the ecclesiastical collar. I hope that my claim to immortality on that account will be taken note of by historians." Duly noted.

— Alice O. Howell

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## THE HUNDRED-YEAR PLAN

Cities and towns in the Commonwealth are required, under the provisions of Chapter 40, Section 48 of the Massachusetts General Laws, to "provide suitable places...for the preservation and convenient use of all books, reports and laws received from the commonwealth..." This has been substantive state law since the mid-nineteenth century. The town has addressed the matter of storing records many times, frequently in the context of establishing a town hall. Nonetheless, law books, bound reports, records of local births, deaths, and marriages, and town meeting record books are currently kept in the town clerk's home and the town garage, and every effort to build a town hall in Monterey over the past hundred years has failed. Officially, we've made do with a few shelves and an old safe. Here is the complete track record.

The need for a town office was first recorded in April of 1900, when Article 5 on the warrant for a special town meeting asked voters "to purchase a piece of land upon which to locate a Town Office and Town Shed and appropriate money for the same," and Article 6 asked "to build an office for the use of the Town Officers enclosed in said office is to be built a fire proof vault for the maintenance of town records and papers and appropriate money for the same." Both articles passed (\$30 allocated for land and \$500 for a town office), but it came to naught two months later because, ac-

cording to a report in *The Berkshire Courier* of June 28, 1900: "The town meeting...was not legal, and one was held...to rescind [sic] the votes passed at that meeting, and begin anew."

In the matter of a town office building, the new beginning stalled for a quarter-century. The next footprint in the paper trail dates from 1924, when the "Selectmen [were] instructed to look up all papers belonging to the town and have them under their care for safekeeping." At annual town meeting the following year it was "voted to raise \$150.00 dollars for use in the placing of shelves in the Selectmen's Room for the keeping of public documents and to move the town safe to the Selectmen's Room."

They must have been sturdy, capacious shelves and one tight safe, for there the matter rested until 1942, when it stirred, but did not awaken. An article to allow "the Town Officers to use the room in the fire house as a town office" was passed over. Sixteen years later the notion of housing local government turned over in its sleep once again. At a special town meeting on August 15, 1958, an unprecedented proposal to "see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or appropriate from available funds a sum of money for the purchase of any land within the Town for the construction of any new building to house jointly the town offices and a town hall with facilities for an auditorium and accommodations for the local post office" was tabled. Not surprising; the word "any" used twice to describe the land sought and the new building hoped for smacks

of desperation, and the Finance Committee made no recommendation on the article.

Back to documented sleep until 1965, the year that under the catch-all final warrant article of every town meeting, which calls for the town to "transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting," the town voted to "instruct the four governing bodies—namely, the Selectmen, the Planning Board, the Assessors, and the Finance Committee—to investigate the municipal building needs of the Town and to bring their findings and report at the annual Town Meeting in February, 1966." By the time of that annual town meeting, the plan called for a "Community Center...to be used for Town Offices, community meetings and recreational purposes." The town hall notion was wide awake. A committee of five was appointed to investigate the feasibility of this proposal. At the next annual town meeting in 1967, money was appropriated to buy land on the hill behind the present-day firehouse for this community center, and a "Town Hall Building Committee" was charged with "preparing plans and specifications for the erection, construction and original equipping of a Town Hall and Community Center, Municipal Buildings and recreation purposes; the Committee to have the power on behalf of the Town, to make application for any available Federal grants therefor." The committee got funds for "necessary costs and expenses, including architect's fees," and was instructed to present "plans and specifications together with its report and recommendations no later than the next Annual Town Meeting." The 1968 annual town meeting voted to continue the committee; in 1969 the town appropriated \$3,300 for "an architect to prepare preliminary plans and specifications for the erection, construction..." etc., etc. and continued the committee again. 1970: continued again.

In 1971 an article to continue once more was defeated, and the matter was dropped until 1985, when, under the standby "any other business" article, voters instructed "the Selectmen to check into ways of preserving the Town records, storage space and looking into a Town Hall." Full circle again! In 1988 the re-

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renewed effort gathered steam and voters appropriated \$2,450 for a "feasibility study on the Grange site or adjacent Town property for a Town Hall and Kindergarten..." (Article 7), and also voted to spend the same amount for a "feasibility study on the property earlier purchased by the Town for the purpose of building a new Town Hall and Kindergarten..." (Article 8). Pause. Forward to 1992: under "any other business" the Selectmen were yet once again instructed to "study the feasibility of a new Town Hall and report to the Town by the time of the next Annual Town Meeting..." At the Annual Town Meeting the following year, 1993, voters rejected expenditure of "\$21,890 for the services of an architect and surveyor and any other Town Hall Committee expenses." An article to reinstate the then-current Town Hall Committee was passed over.

If you already own the Brooklyn Bridge, congratulations. Now try building a Town Hall in Monterey.

The subject is before us once again. Edith Wilson recently bequeathed buildings and property to the town for municipal purposes. The eighteenth-century house with late additions and caretaker cottage don't exactly cry out for conversion to offices, fireproof vault, and an open space for public meetings, but there is also land on which a new structure could be raised. Once again we must decide what to do.

Why has the same project stumbled and then staggered to its feet again, repeatedly for a hundred years? We are certainly not the only small town in the commonwealth that has dubious storage for its old records. That situation is surely unsettling for a select few (especially the town clerk, who bears direct responsibility for "custody or control" of the records), but most townspeople do not lose sleep over it. The long-standing lack of a town hall, on the other hand, sets Monterey somewhat apart from other nearby small towns. What's the deal, are we cheap? Are we an anomalous cluster of political cynics?



It seems for a long time our needs were simple and simply met, but the role of government has grown in a hundred years. Since the nineteen-sixties, when we finally acquired land for a "Community Center," costs have risen generally, and conditions imposed by the state and federal governments on municipal construction have become increasingly complex and costly. The first appropriation for an architect was \$3,300 in 1969; a total of \$4,900 was appropriated in 1988 just to study the prospects for building a town hall on two different sites. Percolation tests and wastewater system planning accounted for a large portion of the expenses incurred. By 1993 the cost of an architect and surveyor for the project (along with "any other" expenses of planning and designing) was put at nearly \$22,000, and voters balked.

Montereyans have done well in recent years at providing themselves with extraordinary facilities, services, and structures. The Fire Company built the town a spacious new firehouse with style at bargain rates; a neighborhood group rebuilt a bridge on a town road to its own ideal and state specifications; a core group of hockey jocks provided momentum for a public skating rink. None of these were small undertakings; all involved some degree of local and state red tape; all were community projects flush with competent volunteers; all were driven by a sense of self-sufficiency. We in Monterey are the envy of many.

Building our own version of Town Hall may differ from these recent successes only in that the structure, the object of the effort, will inevitably express our feelings about government. It will be the place we go for permits, for meetings, to cast ballots and lodge complaints—activities bearing little in common with firefighting, the look and feel of the road home, or a skating party on a cold, snowy Saturday. If our town hall amounts to nothing so far, that has more to do with the nature of government than our sense of community. We all wish, sometimes, that government would just go away, the bigger the farther. Biggest government—

remote, almost abstract, *very* powerful—may not merit the hard words we vent on it, but local government—often annoying, contentious, impinging on our lives in small, inescapable ways, in the manner of insects, or mice—is hardly the city on a hill. None know this better than local officials, who spend at least as much time dealing with the business end of state and federal law over which they have limited control as they do serving their constituents or their own idea of doing what needs to be done.

Yet: here we do have our votes, at every level of government, and in a small town the civic-minded person at least has a *chance* at shaping rules and procedure to community will—even when he or she lacks fabulous wealth and extraordinary talent, ambition, or obsessiveness. It can make a real difference when a smart, hardworking person of good will spends a few years involved in local government.

I have no idea what a building that embodies all this would look like, or who would build it of what materials, using whose money. It's hard to imagine, let alone build. But maybe this time, with a jump start from the gift of land and buildings, we can organize ourselves on the firehouse/bridge/skating rink model and find an efficient shortcut to our own version of Town Hall, a sturdy building for conducting local government that looks both inviting and impressive, is well appointed and not unnecessarily expensive—one more manifestation and source of local pride.

It's a chance to buck the odds, if not the government.

— Peter Murkett

*Thanks to Barbara Swann (Monterey Town Clerk) and Linda Thorpe, who combed the archives for this article.*

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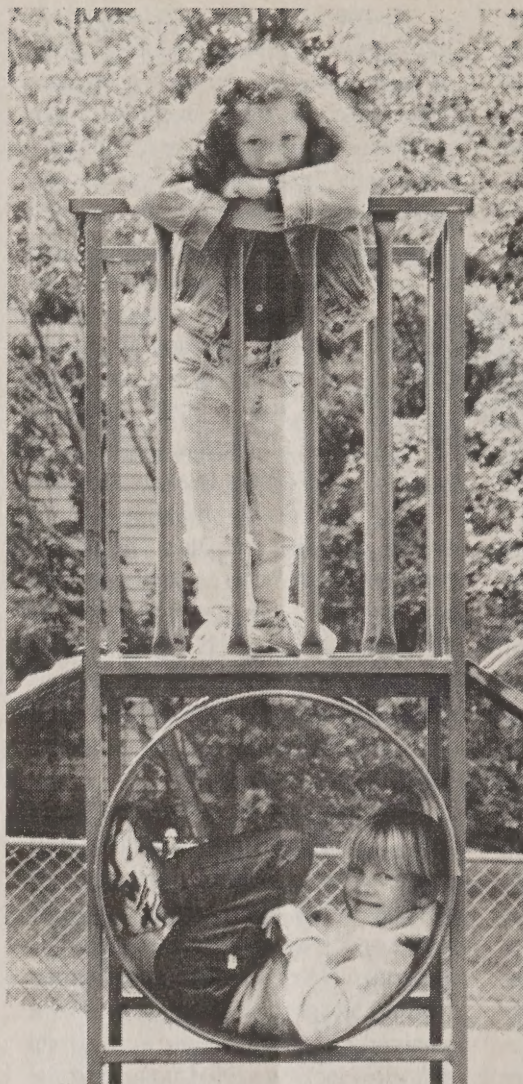


## PERSONAL NOTES

Our hearty congratulations to ecstatic parents **Ira Transport** and **Robyn Transport** of Tyingham Road on the birth of their son **Zachary Dylan Transport**. Zachary was born on August 20 weighing in at 7 lbs., 5 1/2 oz. and measuring 20 inches long. One part of the birth announcement reads, "May your song always be sung." We wish you all lots of joyful music.

And congratulations to elated new parents **Tom Morrison** and **Pam Gauthier** on the birth of their son. **Henri Gauthier Morrison** was born at Fairview on August 24, weighing 8 lbs., 12 oz. and measuring 21 1/4 inches long. Everyone is fine and dandy and settling nicely at their home in Sheffield. It does seem the highway department is a bit concerned about this well-beaten path suddenly appearing between Main Road, Monterey, and their house. Just kidding, but those prouder than proud new grandparents, **Bob** and **Barbara Gauthier** are, not surprisingly, making that trip a lot lately.

Well, not to say when it rains it pours for the Gauthier family, but it was also off to Dover, New Hampshire, for **Bob** and **Barbara**. More congratulations to an overjoyed **Jeff** and **Nancy Gauthier** on the birth of their first also. **Parker Nicholas Gauthier** was born on September 12 weighing in at 6 lbs., 13 oz. and measuring 19 3/4 inches long, and we're happy to report that all is well there, too. Boy, those



*Jhori Jurgenson (standing) and Jason Duryea (curled) enjoy Kindergarten outdoors.*

brag books are sure filling up quickly! Our very best wishes to **Bob** and **Barbara** on the birth of their very first *two* grandchildren. And we end with a direct quote from **Bob**: "If you don't want to hear

about it, stay away from me!"

Who do those bright-eyed smiling faces belong to at the Kindergarten this year? It's off to a great start for **Taylor Amstead**, **Samantha Backhaus**, **Shoshana Candee**, **Jason Duryea**, **Bennett Ferris**, **Mason Hines**, **Jhori Jurgenson**, **Lizzie Meier**, and **Emi Rosenberg**. Teacher **Susan Andersen** and aide **Elaine Bertoli** are delighted to be working with "a very sweet and eager group," and anticipate a simply fine year school year.

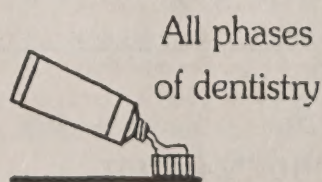
Very happy birthday wishes this month to **Rita Gottlieb** on October 1, to **Jim Gauthier** and **Mabel Sheridan** on October 2, to **Giuliana Raab** and **Noah Markwood** on October 4, to **Oriana Raab** on October 6, to **Tom Thorn** and **Marion Schneider** on October 9, to **Karen Shreefter** on October 11, to **Dave Quisenberry** on October 12, to **Taylor Amstead** and **Jeri Palmer** on October 17, to **Jill Amstead** on October 19, to **Ian Rodgers** on October 22, to **Claire Mielke** on October 24, to **Elizabeth Orenstein** on October 26, and to **Debbie Mielke** on October 27. And happy anniversary to **Jeff** and **Nancy Gauthier** on October 8.

MAGGIE LEONARD

If you have news, birthday greetings, etc. that you would like to share, simply give me a call at 528-4519, or jot items down and drop them in the mail to me, just Route 23. Your submissions are appreciated—thanks in advance!

— Stephanie Grotz

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## CALENDAR

**Sundays, October 6, 13, 20, 27** AA meetings, 9 a.m. in the Monterey Firehouse, Main Road.

**Tuesday, October 15**

Cultural Council Grants deadline, applications at Town Hall. Information, 528-9312.

Flu vaccine, 9-11 a.m. in the basement of Town Hall.

**Wednesday, October 16** Meeting of the Southern Berkshire Solid Waste District, 7 p.m. in the church basement.

**Mondays, October 21, 28, November 4** Discussion on healing at Monterey United Church of Christ, 7 p.m. Phone 528-5557 or 528-1874 for details. All welcome.

**Saturday, October 26** Square and contradance at the Sheffield Grange, Route 7, Sheffield, 8:30-11:30 p.m. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Joe Baker. All dances taught, beginners and children welcome. Refreshments. Adults \$5, children \$2. Information: 413-528-9385 or 518-329-7578.

**Saturday, November 2** Hazardous waste collection. Information, 1-800-238-1221.

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Total precip. ....	3.16"
Monthly norm. (Pitts.) .....	30.29"
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*Contributions from local artists this month: Sudi Baker, p. 13; Erika Crofut, p. 12; Bonner McAllester, p. 14; P. Murkett, pp. 3, 7, 12, 13, 17, 21.*

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MaryKate Jordan  
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